Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

The Social Questions Bulletin

Issued Monthly Except July and August by

THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE
(UNOFFICIAL)

An organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

150 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Secretaries: HARRY F. WARD, CHARLES C. WEBBER, HELEN G. MURRAY

The general policies of this publication are determined by the Executive Committee of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, subject to approval by the General Council of the Federation. The selection of topics and material is committed to the Secretaries, who are responsible to the Federation and to the public for its accuracy.

Entered as second-class matter January 21, 1919, at the Postoffice at New York, N. Y. under Act of August 24, 1912.

Vol. 28 **JANUARY, 1938** **No. 1**

ON GUARD, DEMOCRACY!

The question of whether the democratic forces in this country can be used for social change is now entering a decisive state. Reaction is now getting ready for its big drive. The coalition against democracy is forming.

Toward Reaction and War

Wages and Hours Bill. The line-up can be seen in the attack on the Wages and Hours Bill. Whatever its economic defects, the Bill was an expression of the will of the people, a fulfillment of what Roosevelt promised them in the campaign. It was killed by a combination of those in both parties, North and South, who represent the interests that make profit out of low wages, long hours, unsanitary and non-union conditions. These anti-social elements were joined by the reactionary executives of the A. F. of L. This alliance is furthering the plan of the more powerful, more intelligent interests, to make the people, instead of profits, pay the cost of "recession."

The Farm Bill drew together a stranger combination. Southern Congressmen who don't want any control of wages and hours, who joined the Westerners in attacking the Administration for trying to dictate to the farmer, took all the cotton crop control they could get and called for more. That means aid to their constituents. A Progressive Congressman from a middle-western prairie state defeated the Administration and protected the special interest of the dairy farmers by seeing that the cover crops paid for as soil conservation were not used to feed cattle. Yet the cities and the poorer farms need more meat and more milk. Line upon line, precept upon precept, the American people have to be shown the vast difference there is between government control of economic life within the profit system, and a socially planned economy for social ends.

The major battle comes in the next session of Congress over the issue of taxation. Roosevelt's talk about balancing the human budget has been countered by the announcement of Secretary Morgenthau that he proposes to wipe out the deficit of the national budget by cutting farm aid, road building, and WPA projects. History has seldom seen anything more callous than this proposal to take the budget deficit out of the lives of the unemployed and the farmers instead of out of the profits that have been piled up in the two years of recovery. Nor anything more stupid. This is the way the finance ministers of France talked about the Revolution. Rather than disgorge its excess profits, Big Business will stop the government spending that has provided the purchasing power which makes profits possible. This is the way a ruling class has always acted in history when it had lost its efficiency and was nearing the end of its power.

Two issues are involved. Here is the old question of human rights and property rights in concrete form. All that we have ever said or hoped about the development of personality and the more abundant life becomes a mockery for millions of Americans if the program of Big Business to keep the gains of "recovery" and shift the cost of "recession" to the backs of the people can go through. Beyond that are the consequences of defeating, by the use of political hypocrites, the will of the people so clearly expressed in the last election and in the campaign words of Roosevelt. If nullification of the democratic process can be accomplished by subverting it, what prospect is there for carrying out our program of social change by democratic methods?

Bolder Now! The matter does not stop here. There are increasing signs that the forces of reaction are getting in the mind to overthrow the democratic process in case they cannot longer control it in their own interests.

The things that have long been said in private gatherings of business men and of the idle rich are now getting into print. "You don't scotch a snake, you kill him." "The country cannot stand three more years of dictatorship of Roosevelt." "There must be a united front to save business and the constitution." The editor of *Business Week* even calls for a "Battalion of Death" for this purpose.

At the same time the press develops a manifest drift towards war over the China situation. Atrocity stories. Talk about a nation too craven to protect its interests. Suggestions of naval demonstration. The old story begins once more.

Beneath the surface, two powerful forces push in the same direction. The economic problem is not being solved. In that case, for democracy as well as for dictatorship, war is a distraction. Also, it is as good an escape for democracy from a threatened revolt on the right as it is an escape for dictatorship from an impending revolution on the left. To talk about "peaceful change" that deals only with reform within the capitalist economy is not only puerile, in this situation, it is a dangerous delusion.

Not Too Late. This set of the tide toward reaction and war can be turned if it is seen and met in time. The desires expressed in the last two national elections, the determination to get their rights evidenced by the various kinds of workers now organizing under the banner of the C.I.O., and in such groups as the Artists' Congress, the extent to which all these folk are reaching out after sound social ideas, indicates that the American people need not be led into war, need not suffer under Fascism. They will not go in that direction if they understand in time what is happening. They know where they want to go. They only need to be shown the road. This is one country where the democratic forces can win if they get together in time.

Thus our job becomes increasingly urgent. To explain the meaning of events so that the people will not take the steps that lead to war and the fascist state, to point out what must be done to realize the values the people desire so they will not be deceived by false slogans, to make them see that new timbers cannot hold up the house whose foundation has rotted away—these are our tasks.

Toward Democracy and Peace

One sign of the awakening in the land which makes our task easier is what happened at the recent National Congress for Democracy and Peace, called by the American League Against War and Fascism. The delegates representing over 4 million people, more than a third of whom were members of labor unions, laid the base for a broader and stronger movement by making several important changes in organization and adopting a simple, concrete program.

The name of the organization was changed to the American League for Peace and Democracy. Political parties were eliminated from membership until such time as a sufficient number are ready to come in to make it representative. The National Committee, which elects the Executive Board, is to be constituted by direct representation from the organizations joining the League in proportion to their membership, plus members-at-large who may not be more than 25% of the whole committee, plus representation from the individual membership of the League by states or regions. It is the plan to seek large numbers of individual members at 50c a year.

The League invites to membership all organizations, except political parties, and all individuals who desire to:

Protect and extend democratic rights for all sections of the American people;

Keep the United States out of war and help keep war out of the world.

This broad purpose, which ties together the democracy which is the only possible base for peace and the peace without which democracy cannot endure, will be carried out in a program of action designed from time to time to meet the situations that arise. The initial program for 1938 aims to secure for labor the rights for which it is now struggling; to do the same for minority racial groups; to defeat the Industrial Mobilization Plan; to support the nationalization of the munitions industry, forbidding export except when ordered by Congress in cases of countries invaded by an aggressor; to open up our markets to the governments of China and Spain under conditions designed to remove the risk of our becoming involved in war. A foreign policy is called for which will deny the aid of our economic resources to the war-making, treaty-breaking aggressors, and recognize the necessity of concerted action to this end. As one step, the program supports

The People's Boycott of Japanese Goods. This program is not a creed. Those who agree with the general purpose of the American League and with most of its program of action, finding one or two measures they cannot support, will simply refrain at those points from taking action. Some of our own members feel that they cannot support the campaign to refrain from buying Japanese goods, even when it is conducted not as a punitive boycott, but in the spirit of Christian non-cooperation with the evil doer. We respect their convictions. Bob Tucker suggests a fund for the Japanese workers who will suffer by the refusal to buy their products. This can be sent to our missionaries who will see that it gets to the workers and not to the militarists. We will be glad to receive contributions for this purpose from those who wish thus to offset the damage to Japanese workers done by their refusal to cooperate in the evil being done to China.

Looking over the discussion of this issue one is impressed by the fact that it reaches beyond the realm of reason. Otherwise, it would not be possible for anyone to reply to Stanley Jones' plea, to implement moral condemnation by economic withdrawal, with a declaration of the futility of trying to get Japan out of China by punishing her; or to see no moral difference between what we did in the Boxer uprising and what Japan is now doing; nor to make the contradiction in the statement of the General Conference Commission on World Peace which on one page proclaims "refusal to supply any belligerent with the means of making war" and on another page opposes the economic boycott, without which we go on supplying Japan with the foreign exchange to buy war supplies by purchasing her silk.

For the information of those who have not found in the campaign to get Japan out of China by economic pressure and economic readjustment, any effort to get the other powers out, we would point out that last September the American League Against War and Fascism urged the President to call "at once the conference required by the terms of the Nine Power Treaty to consider not only the ending of Japanese aggression in China, but also the removal of all foreign infringements upon her sovereignty."

The penalty of not taking in time the economic steps to end and prevent Japanese aggression is that we shall later be drawn into war to protect our own "interests and honor." —H. F. W.

The United Christian Council for Democracy at its two-day conference in New York in October passed a resolution in favor of a nation-wide economic boycott against Japan. (Write Richard Morford, 22 Forest St., Albany, N. Y.)

Also—the best brief statement we have seen on "The Crisis in the Far East" comes from the Executive Committee of the Catholic Association for International Peace, Washington, D. C.

The Social Justice Bulletin of Father Michael O'Shaughnessy of New Canaan, Conn., is one of the few signs that have come to our desk of the real spirit of social justice that now lies repressed in the Roman Catholic Church. We have just received this printed card from him: "Publication of *The Social Justice Bulletin* will be temporarily suspended until such time as conditions may be more favorabe for effective advocacy of social justice."—H. F. W.

PROGRESS IN THE FIELD

Looking Ahead: The New York East Social Service Commission met in Brooklyn November 19-20 in preparation for the Spring Conference session. After hearing addresses by Mr. Frank Horne and Rev. Eugene Shrigley, the Commission decided to make an analysis of the present economic system and its failures to provide millions of Americans with the necessities of life, employment and a spirit of genuine brotherhood. The Commission, comprising fifteen ministers and fifteen laymen, was divided into three subcommittees and instructed to report their findings and proposed courses of action at the next meeting of the Commission in January.

If more of the official Social Service Commissions would give such time and thought to the preparation of their reports, there would be fewer milk-and-water pronouncements made by our Annual Conferences upon the great economic issues of the day.

A Symposium Circuit: One District Superintendent has made it possible for the men in the churches of his district to hear various points of view expressed on social and economic questions. Wm. H. Alderson, District Superintendent of the Brooklyn North District of the New York East Conference had 5 sub-district meetings for ministers and laymen in 5 churches in Brooklyn and Long Island on 5 consecutive nights during November. Each meeting was a symposium-forum. The case of capitalism was set forth by a speaker from the New York State Economic Council, cooperatives were advocated by representatives of the Consumers' Cooperative Movement, and the Planned Economy was presented by Charles Webber. Mr. Alderson writes of results: "I hear the most favorable reports of the series. A number of the churches are planning to start forums of their own. They have seen possibilities in this plan which they never had appreciated before."

Welcome New Jersey! M.F.S.S. members from the Newark and New Jersey Conferences have organized a New Jersey State Unit of the M.F.S.S., the first state unit of the Federation. Rev. Harry Relyea of Asbury Park was elected President and Rev. William Twiddy of Rahway, Secretary. The members of the Unit are planning to push social legislation in line with the Federation program.

The Eastern Regional Conference on December 3-4 authorized an executive committee for the area—to be composed of one representative from each of the Eastern Annual Conferences, Maine to Baltimore inclusive. The Federation members present (117 of them from the Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Wyoming, Erie, New York, New York East, Newark and New Jersey Conferences) selected their representatives and elected Rev. Ralph B. Urmy of Westfield, N. J., the chairman.

United Christian Council for Democracy: Following C. C. W.'s address before the Baltimore Chapter of the Church League for Industrial Democracy (Episcopal) at which M.F.S.S. members and members of other Protestant denominations were invited guests, steps were taken to organize a Baltimore City Unit of the U.C.C.D. In Baltimore also Rabbi Edward Israel is planning an unofficial social action group from among the rabbis and laymen of the Jewish Congregations. When this group is formed the members hope to establish a working relationship with the U.C.C.D.

A BOOK AND A PAMPHLET

A word of explanation regarding "The McConnell Symposium" (RELIGION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS). We acted in good faith in October when we wrote you that the publishers were putting the book out at $2.50. They had definitely notified us of that. However, on December 1, as the book appeared, they found they could drop to $2. But remember that you who have bought through us have made possible the publication of this valuable book. *We had to take 750 copies to get it published.* Can't you preach a book-review sermon inspiring some of your only half convinced laymen to read this splendid record of social courage that they may become imbued with it? Pushing this book will help push the cause of social righteousness.

The McConnell Pamphlet—("Twenty-five Years of Religious and Social Change") is the Federation's presentation of Bishop McConnell's Carnegie Hall address in a 5c pamphlet, in a form both attractive and serviceable. Use this pamphlet by the hundred copies ($4) in your conferences, institutes and on your local church literature-tables.

EASTERN REGIONAL

The Eastern Regional Conference of the M.F.S.S., meeting December 3 and 4 at Union Theological Seminary, commenting on the "crisis which manifests itself in rising prices that outrun wages, in a decrease in relief and public projects, coinciding with increasing unemployment and the depression of business and investment values," urged these immediate steps:

Appropriations for relief and public projects to match the needs of the unemployed; a fair wage-and-hours bill; education of our people as to the subtle motives behind such demands as the incorporation of labor unions, designed to cripple their effectiveness; maintaining civil liberties in our communities; granting the use of our churches to minority groups when other meeting places have been denied; support of the Wagner anti-lynching bill.

Regarding the church itself, the Conference made certain specific recommendations:

The use of the union label on all church literature; in local communities a fellowship of socially minded Christians cutting across denominational lines, affiliated with the U.C.C.D.; the organization within Conference and State borders of M.F.S.S. units for fellowship, study and action; the formation of an Eastern Regional Committee composed of representatives of Eastern Conferences to aid in the creation of the above, to give counsel in times of need, and to plan for social advance.

THEY APPRECIATE US!

The November *Pulpit Digest* used practically our entire October issue on "The Church and State." Edgar Jackson's sound facts and clear analysis are widely appreciated. Excellent homiletical material—these Bulletins of ours. Don't wait for the *Pulpit Digest* to open your eyes to their value.

The Education Committee of the Social Service Employees' Union of the United Office and Professional Workers of America ordered 200 of Jule Ayers' December Bulletin, on United Labor, to use as the basis of discussion groups throughout their chapters. "It's the best thing of its kind I've seen" is the word from Miss Gifford, chairman of the Committee. "I hope you'll do more as things develop."

—AND WE THEM!

Zion's Herald (December 1) reprints in full Bishop Blake's address given before the workers of Detroit previous to the recent municipal election, "Labor's Stake in the Functioning of Government." We hope soon to have this address in pamphlet form, as we now have his "The Constitution in Industrial America." (Civil Rights Federation, Detroit, 3c.)

"Religion and Democracy in Social Action," an address by Frank A. Horne in pamphlet form, stresses the essential unity between the democratic process and religious freedom. (Obtainable from Clint W. Lee, 501 East Pine St., Seattle, Wash., 2c.) Note also the reprint of Edward F. Randolph's (Lancaster, Pa.) Camp Innabah address "Present World Conditions." A realistic facing of real facts.

Paul DuBois explains his decision to come out definitely in favor of the Japanese Boycott, in the December issue of the *Prospect Tower,* (Bristol, Conn.). Cogent reasoning leading to effective action.

PAMPHLET RECOMMENDATIONS

Industrial Unionism, 5c; *Case for Industrial Organization,* 10c. (Comm. for Industrial Organization, 1106 Conn. Ave., Washington, D. C.)

Women in the United States, by Mary E. Pidgeon, 15c. (U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington.)

L Is for Labor, by Leane Zugsmith, 4c. (League of Women Shoppers, 220 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.)

Flivver King, by Upton Sinclair, 25c. (Pasadena.)

Fordism, by Carl Raushenbush, 15c. (League for Industrial Democracy, 112 E. 19th St., N. Y. C.)

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

You Have Seen Their Faces, by Caldwell and White, 75c. (Modern Age Books.)

When Labor Organizes, by Brooks, $3. (Yale University.)

America's 60 Families, by Lundberg, $3.75. (Vanguard.)

Goliath, the March of Fascism, by Borgese, $3. (Viking.)

The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism, by Brady, $3. (Viking.)

A $1 membership brings this *Bulletin* once a month except in July and August. 20c plus 1½c postage brings our set of 18 Crisis Leaflets.